177. metic book for an old man called Samuel who produced a series of swot
87 books on various subjects, beautifully tabulated books with questions
876 and answers, invaluable for examinations and used even in my day when we and our school teachers whisked them out of sight of Education Inspectors who came on the prowl for just such unprogressive methods of education. He also went across to the American Mission School where quite often the teachers were more Christian and painstaking than brilliant, to help old Teacher Nellie with Geometry riders, and in this way he met my mother.

●873 My parents could not get married as soon as they left school. My
593 father had first to go to the University, which consisted then of Rangoon
562 College, affiliated to Calcutta University, and then he felt he must work
582 to buy my grandmother a big enough plot of paddy land so that her two youngest sons would not need to look after her in Ye, but could come into the world like my father. He now felt that they should not be denied the wonderful opportunities which he had found. My father did go to College, but had passed only his F. A. (corresponding to Intermediate) when he heard that my mother was now going out to teach in a school at Thaton, and that she was having to put on a European gown and hat in order to be less conspicuous, because at that time no Burmese Buddhist ladies went out to work. My father left his studies at once and got a job in the same school to look after her, and it was only after some months of persuasion by Grandfather and my mother that he consented to leave and look for a better paid position.

647 He managed to obtain a myookship in the Government Service,
177. which is a junior administrative post but considered a very good job for
65 Burmans in those days. In this job he could save enough to buy Grand-
582 mother her paddy land, after which he and my mother would get married. But my father with his good looks, his teetotaller habits, and his myookship, was considered a desirable son-in-law by many people, and other parents were not like Grandfather; they would try to engage the young man's affections for their daughters. I am sure my mother spent the next three years in some anxiety, as she heard stories of the young myook's gay and happy life in such far-off towns as Toungoo and Shwegyin. But one day the children dashed up to her with a telegram; she opened it and read *Gyi will you marry me.* My mother, who has never shown any excitement as far as I can remember, got up very quietly and went to her chest of drawers. She took out ten annas in change, and wired back *Yes.*

584 Soon after this my father arrived amidst great excitement on the part of my mother's family and a pretence of complete ignorance on Grandfather's part. My aunts expected an explosion from him when

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Oh mother, mother,
When will you come ?
The crow is tired with a-cawing.

But conditions improved with time; we grew older and less imaginative, and above all the tide of Burmese nationalist feeling which surged into being in about 1920 was at last beginning to seep through the convent walls.

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Even the nuns heard, in 1930, about Saya San who raised a rebellion in Tharawaddy district, and roused such fervour among a certain section of the population that about 2,000 rebel followers were killed—their bodies vulnerable to gunfire in spite of the charms they had tattooed on—before the Government succeeded in suppressing the rebellion. Although Saya San was a charlatan to those in authority, and his followers a band of unruly dacoits, his conviction that he was born to become the monarch of a newly resurrected Burmese kingdom fired the imagination of some nationalists. To them he was an intrepid spirit, his courage so keen and his body so hardy: *Kya ko Khalok, thitngok hnin hsu ko thinbyu :* The tiger his stubbing stone, tree stumps and bushes of thorns his smoothest mat. By the time the nuns had heard of Saya San I had another Burmese girl as a fellow boarder and class-mate. Grace Nee was a girl of great spirit and mental liveliness. Her father was also an a-so-ya min, and we derived great comfort and happiness from each other's presence. When the class-teacher scolded one of us, saying, "You Burmans nowadays are expecting us to kow-tow to you. Yes, this mad fellow Saya San. And you think that we must bow to you," then the other would bang desk and chair in sympathy and indignation. Our hearts would swell to bursting point, for though we knew little yet about nationalism or patriotism, we identified our country and our race with the persons of our parents, and we could hardly bear this constant humiliation of their name. We shrank from telling them about it, however. My father never knew how different our life at school was from the world at home, and my mother will learn of it for the first time when she reads this.

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What a glorious new world opened out before us when we went to the University. What splendour there was in the richness of Burmese dress, food, companions, religious celebration, music, dancing and wit. I only regret that I could not take full advantage of these years because family troubles tumbled around my ears just then, and when they had subsided I was forced into earnest study to win the best degree possible in order to comfort my mother. This was necessary because up till this time I had always disappointed my parents because I had preferred popularity among companions to concentration on studies. Rangoon

University, which was embodied in 1920 from two colleges which had been affiliated to Calcutta University, now consisted of four constituent colleges—University College, Judson College, Teachers' Training College and Medical College. Of these, the Teachers' Training College led a self-sufficient collegiate life of its own, with its normal school, its Anglo-Vernacular high school and its graduate students. Judson College which was an American missionary college contained a very large percentage of Karens and Christians. Medical College was situated a good distance away from the University estate, and in any case students did not enter its buildings until their third year. For the great majority of Burman Buddhists, therefore, the University meant University College with its strength of about 200 women and 800 men students. 873 •

The buildings of the college were laid out on a garden estate of the University, about four miles out of Rangoon. There were brick and wood residential halls grouped in units, great blocks of teaching buildings in a series of rectangular arms from a main block, a University Convocation Hall in the form of a massive square structure laid heavily at the head of a fine central drive, a narrower and lofty University Library building, a Union Hall, a gymnasium with bright dancing murals on its outside walls, and later a Buddhist Congregational Hall with the traditional tiered roofs in concrete. Opposite was Judson College in the same style, but with the scale greatly contracted. The whole arrangement was set out with stretches of grassy lawns, gardens, great trees and the thousand smaller trees, which had been planted when the estate was first laid, and residential houses for the staff; and bordering all were the Kokine Lakes, extensive stretches of water with pretty banks and wooded islands. The University estate could have been developed into a self-sufficient garden city for it had already a post office, a bookshop and a small hospital of its own, and a servants' village stretched out till it joined the Teachers' Training College not far away. Although the blocks of modern structures could have been built in a more Burmese style, there was enough romance in these surroundings for those of us who had come from English schools. The Convocation Hall was guarded by two giant bronze gryphons squatting on slabs of concrete, in the way that lion gryphons guard all our pagodas. The names of the residential halls were the names of ancient capitals of Burma—Prome, Tagaung, Pagan and Ava; Pegu, Thaton, Sagaing and Inya. The bus service connecting the University with Rangoon town was marked with the naga—the dragon of our mythology and a noble beneficent creature. It was the most elevated of the Rangoon Electric Tramway's attempts at symbols for the illiterate users of buses—an aeroplane for Mingaladon 873

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where the airport of Rangoon was situated, a horse's head for the suburb of Insein where wild horses used to graze before the area was cleared and built up, a prawn for the suburb of Pasundaung which name means "Mountain of Prawns" and a naga for the *Tegatho*, the Taxila of learning.

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Burmese girls and boys came to this University from the age of sixteen upwards. They studied English and Burmese and a combination of three other subjects for two years, reducible to one for more promising students, and then took an Intermediate Arts or Science examination. After this, a small percentage read an Honours Course for three years, and the great majority took a B.A. or a B.Sc. with a combination of three subjects. There were facilities for an M.A. course, a Law Degree, and an Engineering Degree in a special Engineering College endowed by the Burma Oil Company. For graduates who wished to return to cram for a competitive examination for one of the government services, there was a useful system of minor tutorship posts which, originally paying Rs. 120/- per month, had been split up into two or three posts paying Rs. 40/- to Rs. 60/- for about four to six hours of work per week. This enabled students to have an extra year or two of preparation without any support from home, because boarding fees in any of the halls amounted to Rs. 24/- only. Indeed for the richer classes of Burmese people, life at the University was one of the cheapest ways of passing years in pleasant surroundings, and only the existing rules prevented some from continuing their adolescence into their late thirties. One of my cousins who showed such promise that he matriculated at fifteen, became a rowing man with much money to spend after he joined the University and spent altogether fifteen years as an undergraduate, dodging from one college to another, alternating the arts and the sciences as a reason for his long stay. My uncle Kyaw Din, who carried off the prize of the year in his Intermediate examination, subsequently spent seven years getting his B.A. because he was the best footballer of his day.

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Although there were students here and there who were buried in books either from a love of learning or from being the only breadwinner of a family, my remembrance of University College, Rangoon, is of a great mass of boys and girls who tried to get a passable degree round examination time, but were otherwise submerged in a flood of love and dramatic entertainment. The various associations of arts and sciences, religious and racial fraternities, were more social than intellectual in their activities, but in the Union there was no lack of exciting and impassioned discussions. Here it was that Thakin Nu, Foreign Minister during the Japanese occupation, and Major-General Aung San, leader of the Burmese National Army, harangued us as junior students. Here there was such fierce heartburning about agrarian troubles, labour strikes at the

Yenangyaung oilfields, support of Ministers, and the indifference of the less worthy sections of University staff and students towards the nationalist movement. 873 668

The crowning event of my years there was the great strike of 1936 when about 600 students got into buses just before the final examinations and encamped themselves on the slopes of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda hill, with much sympathy and material support from the public, the men returning every morning to picket the black-leg examination candidates by lying across all exits and entrances—a completely successful technique, for it is an unthinkable insult to a Buddhist male to have his body trodden on, and no Burman, or Burma Indian or Chinese for that matter, will dare to inflict such an insult. Some of the strikers felt, after the rallying speeches in the Union, that they were striking to evict an immoral member of the staff who had the support of the Principal whom they considered an autocrat; others knew that definite demands had been put forward for the amendment of the University Act, the ultimate result of which would be to make this Principal more accountable to Burmese political leaders; a great majority felt a wave of unnameable exaltation as they stormed hall after hall for recruits, ringing bells and shouting, "Come on, sisters, the day of freedom has arrived at last!" and almost all banged and cheered as they drove away, on the roofs, the steps and the wheels of the buses, at the thought of no examinations that year, and the exciting days of picketing ahead. But it was a tragic and unhappy time for some who did not have money to waste on another year before graduation and who trusted that the authorities would succeed in holding the examinations, or for others who did not join out of personal loyalties of the moment and who had friends and brothers with impassioned convictions on the other side. I shall always remember the face of my friend Ko Ohn, as he refused to let a doctor into Inya Hall to attend to a sick non-striker, his good face so full of distress and his longyi all smudged with the melted tarmac of the road in which he had been lying under the hot March sun. "Please, we must do it," he said; "I am so thirsty and my head is aching, but we must do it for our country." [577]

One of the reasons for the focussing of public interest on the University students was the great interest taken in the development of the young women there. The male students, like the public, were not interested in them only for reasons of courtship or companionship, but took a keen objective interest in them. It has been said of Burma that she has no feminist movements because none have been necessary; the women have always had all the rights they wanted. But it goes further than that. Burmese men take a sincere pride in the achievements of a woman who can successfully invade spheres outside her domestic tasks. 873 562 179

873 562 178 Far from the medical and legal professions presenting a closed phalanx to the first women seeking to enter, Burmans love to introduce their distinguished women as "the first lady doctor" and "the first lady barrister". On the other hand they demand that on no account shall a woman take on mannish and immodest behaviour and outlook with her new abilities. Allowances will be made, if necessary, for weaker constitutions, extra time spent on the making of a formal sadone hair style before attending work, or for soft voices.

Hence, in University College, where there was a generation of adolescent girls, some of whom had never before been to Rangoon from their district schools, the greatest interest was taken in their line of development—their scholastic success, their interest in or indifference to politics and nationalism, the degree of their response to Westernizing influences, their clothes and their morals—and yet the most censorious interest was not to be taken as personal or malicious. It was concern for the future of Burmese womanhood, we were told. Thus no woman student had any private life or anonymity. Whatever characteristics she possessed were taken up by a few who were interested in those particular qualities and then received the attentions of the great body of men students who only wanted something to sharpen their wit on. The height of this interfering concern, on the part of young men, for the moral welfare of young women was reached in 1940 when a petition was seriously put up to the Principal of University College, by a number of students, that certain young women be ordered to shorten the shoulder straps of the ornamental bodices worn under the transparent jackets. So sincere was their solicitude that the Principal felt constrained to refer the matter to the Warden of the Women's Hall for action.

But the young men were not stinting in approval either, even though the majority expressed it in loud good-natured chaff. In fact, for a keen interest in politics, for wit, for exquisite coyness or a proud beauty, the girls in University College were in as much limelight as can surround a rugger hero at an English University. And indeed, the word "hero" was used for them because the word "heroine" could not be shouted in Burmese euphony. Hence, if a report had gone abroad that a girl had swum the 2,000 yards of the cross-lake track, or had harangued a group of young men for bad manners, or was coming to a lecture with her hair in an informal knot at the back of her head instead of a formal sadone, she was greeted on entrance by a hundred odd youths stamping and cheering and jeering and all shouting, "Hero! Hero!"

873 562 883 No wonder there was love everywhere. Even in modern Rangoon an unmarried young man and woman could not be seen without the presence of a third person, but sentimental love flourished all the more

for that. It surged up amongst all the back benches of the lecture rooms and flowed into the corridors where the poor stricken couples blushed and spoke in whispers in spite of the applause of all passers-by. It flowed along the shores of the Inya Lake on whose banks the girls walked in groups of two or three after their evening bath and toilet, and the youths walked in other bands until they met and spoke to the girls. Particularly on the fine evenings of the first monsoon or the first cool dry weather after the deluge had spent itself, the shores of Inya Lake presented a scene of the greatest human felicity. All that was sweet in life seemed to be collected there—youth and pretty faces, fine Burmese silks and newly washed hair, anticipations of joyful meetings, the clear calm water and the brilliant evening sky, the islands in the distance and the bands of young men singing sad songs by the water's edge.

Dramatic entertainment was very rich at the University. It was rarely that the students themselves performed in musical concerts or stage dancing, but troupes of actors were hired to give performances at all celebrations of sports victories, scholastic successes, farewells to popular tutors who had got into government service, or celebrations of religious festivals. The traditional Burmese stage-play is the *zat-pwè*, the staging of one of a few well-known stories, based mainly on the Jatakas which are stories showing incarnations of the Buddha in his various existences on this earth. Such were the *Wethandaya Zat*, the *Mahaw Zat*, of U Kyin U, the stories of Buddha's life as Prince Wethandaya and as Mahaw, son of a rich nobleman. Written in this form all zats, whether based on the Jatakas or not, contained episodes to provide King and Minister scenes, doleful partings and the weeping dirge of the heroine, scenes of clowning, of sorcerers and heavenly spirits and, highlight of all, the happy meeting scene of the Prince-Hero and the Princess-Heroine, when they sing and dance and joke with the attendant characters, singly and together, for a whole hour or two maybe, while they and the audience forget the thread of the story in the wonderful agile dancing of the hero, his feet falling as softly and as lightly as a kitten's paws but with all the speed, the unexpected turns, the beauty of body and of costume, which make the male zat dancer the essence of the national gaiety. In our time, the old zat plays are treated much as the miracle plays of Elizabethan England probably were—the plot is there, but each company of actors uses the play to hold its own songs, dances and comic lines. The zat lasts for hours, all the night through until sunrise, but the form of it is such that the audience sees it as episodes against a known background of plot, and can thus eat, talk or even doze during the tedious connecting scenes and sit up in enthralled silence for the first appearance of the hero, the duet dances, the songs of the heroine.

• 873 536 We could not stage these shows at the University owing to the length of them and the difficulty of procuring a company. We saw them often in childhood when there were two great companies touring the districts. Po Sein and Sein Gadon came with their companies to the district towns; they hired the local hall, and then charged their audiences by mat-space. Buyers of spaces came earlier in the day and laid down their thinbyus over the rough bamboo mats provided. At night the whole family, including grandmothers and young children, arrived with pillows, fans, goblets of drinking water and things to eat, and squatted and reclined each on its own mat. Vendors of pickled tea and jujube plums, both of which have the effect of keeping one awake, walked in and sold their packets without a license, but just as an overflow from the row of food stalls that had sprung up in the lane leading to the hall.

545 873 At the University, however, we always staged *anyein-pwès*, and not these night-long zat-pwès. An anyein is a much handier, more compact sort of entertainment. The troupe consists of two clowns, one chief dancing girl and two subsidiary ones, and a band of musicians. Such a troupe can be hired for about Rs. 40/-. No seats are ever bought for an anyein; people hire them to celebrate weddings, shinbyus and other happy events. They perform on a rough open-air stage, and the show is free to all who wish to flock to see it. The poorest beggars may perch themselves on neighbouring trees and fences to enjoy the four-or five-hour programme of songs, dances and jokes.

545 534 [782] When an anyein was held at University College, we entered the grounds at about 7 p.m. and found the stage with its rear occupied by the orchestra tuning instruments and practising snatches of the airs; in the centre a basinful of offerings to propitiate the nat-spirits so that the entertainment will be a success; and at the opposite corners of the front of the stage the two clowns squatting, watching the audience enter and uttering declamations about the occasion of the entertainment; but as yet in a very desultory fashion, while they scratched their heads, cleaned their ears and chewed betel, because nobody was ready to pay full attention. Very shortly, however, the orchestra came to life in a harmonious concert. Within the circular frames of two big harmonicums, about two to three feet high and four to five feet in diameter, sat the master players. The *kyi-waing* master was surrounded by a row of graduated gongs strung along the inside of the harmonicum, which he struck with a knobbed stick in quick melody. The *saing-waing* master produced a thinner strain from his graduated drums which he struck with the flat of his fingers. Between the two sat a *hnè* player, blowing loudly his clarionet which had a wide bell-shaped mouth; the *pulway* master played lively dancing notes on his flute; a gentle looking youth

1: Mi Mi Khaing 1-5 (no date) 1946 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

539 Dweller of Mandalay, City of Jewels,
With a generous heart
To come and take part
As student of our greatest schools.
Indeed so willing
So glad to be filling
Our need for the cause of the National School.
With mind so kind towards the fund
For Buddhist girls, our country's dower,
As this succeeds our plans shall flower.
She comes to dance for the National School,
She comes to dance,
She comes to dance,
Young lady Ohn, sweet, single, pretty,
For whom Shwe Daing Nyun has written this ditty.

•873 522 We laughed loud and long at the jokes of our most popular pair of clowns—a thin shrivelled man called Hnyat-Gyi ("great nut-cracker")

and a big well-fed man called Dambouk ("pillau rice")—on the occasions when we could hear them, but during the intervals our daily companions at the University did not allow us to miss them very much. The average Burman spends much time and thought, comparatively speaking, on making puns and spoonerisms, fashioning riddles and conceits to spice or flower his normal speech, and both the native wit and the monosyllabic language ensure a roaring success. It was the commonest thing to pass a crowd of students sitting or standing around having a

verbal contest, and to hear at intervals a cheering and clapping as they shouted "Point! Point!" which English word they had adopted for applauding a telling thrust. This interest in wit enabled our lecturers to enliven their discourses with spontaneous humour rather than to draw upon a perennial stock of jokes. There were both serious and frivolous uses of this privilege. We had two serious old Burmese lecturers —Saya Lin and Saya Pwa—who belonged to my grandfather's world, coming to lecture every day in the purest Burmese but never noticing the existence of the modern college, its young inhabitants or other branches of learning. They were regarded with so much veneration that no student ever answered the now universally adopted English "Present" to their roll-call but replied: "*Shi ba tè, Saya:* I am here, please, Master."

At one time Saya Lin's junior Bachelor classes contained a girl student who was admired by a young man called Maung Chan Tha (which name means "Prosperity"). Maung Chan Tha had passed his junior Bachelor year and was in a senior class, but he attended the junior class daily in order to have a back view of his loved one whom he did not dare to address. This dumb worship occasioned a daily distraction among the embarrassed girl and her companions and a lot of ribald comments from the back benches. Saya Lin continued oblivious of all this until one day the term, "*paw-rana saga:* descriptive old usage", occurred in his text. "Now, shall I explain to you what *paw-rana saga* is?" said Saya Lin. "It is the other name for an object or an animal, which must describe its qualities. We have the pig, which in paw-rana may be termed *to-pwa*: prolific increase; and then we have the ox. The ox", said the old man with a fierce denouncing arm pointed at the offending swain, "may be termed Prosperity—*Chan Tha*!" At which a hundred lusty throats yelled "Point! Point!" and the discomfited Maung Chan Tha fled, never to attend a junior class again.

When the strikers of 1936 attacked the moral influence of a young member of the staff, one of the 18 serious charges they formally laid to his account was his habit of punning with the names of young lady students in too playful a manner. Among his students were two pretty sisters whose names, A-si and A-yi, could mean respectively, "in a row" and "smiling", a Christian girl called Margaret who was serious enough but whose name pronounced in Burmese scanned and rhymed with a word denoting excessive frivolity, and a noisy Chinese girl called Ma Ngan Chu. Said the poetic lecturer in illustrating various points:

Myet-lon galay ga ta-kyi-kyi — Little eyes, clear, beguiling,
Thwa galay ga a-si a-yi. — Little teeth, *seried, smiling.*
Kalet tet-tet — Coquette, coquette,
Mar-ga-ret. — *Margaret.*

873 Or, in less complimentary vain :

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Hsu Hsu pa pa	Boisterous shrew
Ma Ngan Chu.	*Ma Ngan Chu.*

522 But only in a novel can justice be done to the sustained humour,
538 precision and allusiveness of colloquial speech. Proverbs may be a pointer, however, and the following, a few of the hundreds familiarly used by the normal Burman, are typical of the condensation of thought, the concrete nature of the allusions, and the witty rhyming usually present.

Kala ma-naing, *Ya-kaing mè.*	Can't get the better of the Indian, So the Arakanese is black.	Venting your wrath on a scapegoat.
Paya lè pa yin *Leiku lè tu yin.*	While worshipping at pagoda, Digging for turtle's eggs too.	Kill two birds with one stone.
Khat taing ngan-de *Pago hsa.*	O Pegu salt That flavours every ladleful.	The ubiquitous person.
Hsin pa-sat *Hnan-pet.*	Pelting the elephant's mouth With sesame seeds.	Five loaves and two fishes.
Kala taik *Kya win kaik.*	Into Indian building Tiger enters and bites.	Bedlam.
Mi-gyaung min *Yay gin pya.*	Showing the crocodile King The water tracks.	Teach Grandmother to suck eggs.
Thay yin myay gyi *Nay yin shway hti.*	Die, the earth ; Stay, the gold umbrella.	Do or die. Be corpse or King.
Taung hma a-kut *Meinma hma a-wut.*	As border to basket So dress to a woman.	
Shin bayin tahka htwet *Pe-gyi ta-lay kyet.*	One appearance of a King, One boatload of broad-beans can be cooked.	Person who is always late in appearing dressed.

tinkled with every passing breeze. The Shwe Dagon Paya was a beautiful and sacred thing. In the early mornings it gave a radiance to the clear air and the blue sky; in the daylight it shone forth like a blaze of gold, burning and pure; in the evenings it glowed softly as the breeze tinkled its bells, and filled the heart with a gentle sadness which is not grief but a sweet perception of unearthly things; and at night the lights flooded it to stand high and illumined above the dark wooded slopes of the hill. At all times and from all parts of Rangoon it could be seen, calm and sublime, with the same smiling look as is seen on the face of the Buddha, not smiling in the eyes or mouth but in the serene expression of inward calm.

As we landed in Rangoon we saw a great gathering of people waiting to meet us. Going abroad for years of study is still a rare enough event to be of interest to all relatives and neighbours, so that the people were assembled not only for an affectionate reunion, but also to observe in what way the stay in England might have corrupted Burmese habits. In the case of a man it is always feared that he may bring back an English wife, and it sometimes happens that a loved child who has been away for five and six years may be greeted with tears and mourning rather than expressions of joy, if he has married an English girl. The tears of mother and sisters are very heartfelt; they express shame at what the neighbours will think, sorrow at the alienation of the man and his children which must inevitably occur, and chagrin at the loss of the rich dowry which might have been procured in the marriage market.

Even when a man does not marry in England, he is strongly scrutinized for undesirable preferences in the matter of marriage arrangements. I remember the night my brother came home. It was his first evening in Burma after nine years of English schooling and University, and it was clear enough that he was neither married nor secretly engaged to an English girl. But my Ma Ma Gyi, my eldest woman cousin who had children as old as we were, subjected him to a searching enquiry. "Set-Set," she said, calling him by his childhood name, "do you think English girls are more attractive than Burmese girls?" My brother who had many English friends but had not noticed any Burmese girls during his few hours in Burma, tried not to answer this question. On being held to it, he said they were different from each other and could not be compared. My cousin said, "But which do *you* like better?" She was getting quite stern by this time, and my mother and we who felt very sorry for my brother were all praying that he would tell a lie, as we held our breath. My brother repeated with much awkwardness that the two were different; so now my cousin took his opinion for granted, and lectured him on the desirability of marrying in an orthodox Burmese manner so that he would prove himself a good son to his mother, a good

177. 57 • 873 186 582 brother to his young sisters, and thus give joy to the whole family. "For," said she, "our family has always commanded respect. Grandfather was a great man, and you are the only son of the youngest family of his grandchildren, and it should not be said that with us the end tapers to a point;" which is the expression for a stock which degenerates with successive generations.

In the case of a girl, there was not of course, the fear that she would bring back an English husband, but the concern that Burmese standards of morality and dignity would be affected by an unchaperoned stay in a foreign country was very great. As we landed, I remembered enough of my childhood environment to feel the eyes of elder relatives and friends on me while I tried to restrain the wild excitement and love I felt at seeing again my mother and my young sisters now grown so sweet and shy, and I noticed also that my brother had been home long enough not to kiss me in front of my aunts as he had done when he himself had first returned from England. I felt this scrutiny also when my mother took me on the round of obeisance visits during my first days at home, and it formed a complement to the visit which I had paid to each of these elder relatives and friends before I left for England three years before. Then, each had given me a lecture which contained strong injunctions to keep to the path of virtue, modesty and dignity. But these were just *son-ma saga*, admonitory words, to be received with meekness, and not a slight on the strength of my character, just as now, when, satisfied with their scrutiny, they told my mother that her womb should be layered [192] with gold leaf (sacrilegiously using the term for the gilding of sacred objects) for having brought forth such daughters, I was not expected to take conceit.

192 186 In all the houses of friends in Rangoon, in Thaton and Ye, I went through the same ritual, but the words of the hpongyi at Thaton moved me more than any other. "Now I will tell three stories about Mi Mi Khaing," he said, and proceeded in beautiful words and a chanting flow; "You are like a young tree planted of good seed in the fertile earth. Now the tree is heavy with ripe fruit, but the boughs are tender and bend under the weight. The tree must grow carefully and steadily, so that the full fruit do not break the young bough.....Let your stature be measured by your shadow that is cast after the noonday sun, for your knowledge and learning are now at noonday height. So your shadow will grow longer and longer towards the setting of the day.....Let your merit be like a river that gathers more strength from the rain that falls about it, and grows from a stream into a great river before it joins the mighty Thammodhaya." Then he took the monk's expression off his face, and turned to me with a smile and asked in a normal speaking

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The key to high positions lies in education in the high schools and Universities. Family support is necessary for this and the student is constantly aware of his obligation to succeed for their benefit. "One tree can support a thousand birds" illustrate the dependency of the relatives on the successful individual.

In order to succeed one needs each of these three qualities: KAMMA (fate or luck), NYAN (intelligence), and WIRIYA(industriousness The failure of any one can cause the lack of success. Ordinarily, however, KAMMA is blamed in cases of failure - and the other two credited for success. The concept of KAMMA includes merit and demerit compiled in all previous existences. Because of this convenient excuse the true causes of failure are seldom analysed by the individual and he does not have a sense of personal blame or shame. Also social condemnation does not fall heavily on the unsuccessful who has tried and failed. However, one should finish what he starts or not attempt it, "once you start climbing the pole you must reach the top". The individual may not achieve fame or fortune but he is expected to maintain his birth position. His relatives, who suffer shame if he does not, help him. A major contribution of the individual is an advantagous marriage within or above his occupational group.

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What does one strive for, by work, in the Burmese society? Not subsistence, for food is ordinarily cheap and easily attained in the villages. Clothing, shelter and the other necessities of life are also not the objective. The subsistence pattern is simple and essentially homogeneous throughout the village.

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The ordinary head of a household thinks of three major benefits to be gained from wealth. The first and most immediate are jewels to adorn the women of the family. The status of the family is reflected in public by the bangles, necklaces and earrings worn by the ladies. Diamonds are most prized and the size is important. However, most important is that each female be provided with "a set" of jewelry. The wife of the middle and upper status group particularly will prod the husband until he provides these necessities. The women's clothing and also the husbands and his son's must also be the finest they can afford.

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The second urge for wealth arises out of the desire for old age security. Hence gold coins are saved (hidden) against the day when